

# Homelessness count breaks record



Luke Hammill of the Lake County News-Sun. (Brian O'Mahoney / Lake County News-Sun)

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**V**olunteers found 26 people sleeping outside in Lake County during the annual "point-in-time" count of the homeless last month, the highest number on record going back to 2005.

County Board members released the news in email newsletters sent out this month.

The previous record for "unsheltered" homeless people found during the point-in-time tally was 20, counted in 2010. Last year, volunteers found 19 unsheltered people. Seventy-five volunteers joined the effort this year — another record.

Numbers weren't yet released in the newsletters for the number of homeless staying in shelters. During the previous four-year stretch, the total number of homeless in Lake County decreased from 497 in 2013 to 299 in 2016. The number statewide similarly decreased from 14,009 in 2011 to 11,590 in 2016.

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temporarily pulling the organization's business license. The office reopened, but clients no longer can take showers at the facility or hang around outside without a reason for being there.

Advocates have appeared at multiple Waukegan City Council meetings since then to urge the city to provide a better solution for the city's homeless.

## **County Board approves Lawlor's reforms**

After a spirited discussion last week, the County Board unanimously approved a resolution supporting Chairman Aaron Lawlor's proposed reforms to Lake County's structure of government.

The reforms — which Lawlor proposed in the form of amendments he hopes state Sen. [Terry Link](#) (D-Waukegan) would make to a bill he filed in Springfield — would put ballot questions before voters, asking them whether they would like to elect the County Board chair at large, whether the County Board should be reduced in size and whether the county should find a way to more fairly and independently draw the boundaries between board districts.

Link's bill would simply mandate that the County Board chair be elected at large beginning in 2020. Currently, the chair is elected by fellow County Board members. Link has said he would be open to letting voters decide whether they want to elect the board chair countywide, but he balked at Lawlor's other proposed reforms, saying the county could undertake those efforts itself if County Board members wanted.

Lawlor, a Republican, and numerous County Board members took umbrage with Link's bill, even though they agree it has merit. They accused Link of filing the bill without first consulting the county, which they characterized as a breach of decorum.

Board members like Democrat Paul Frank (District 11) said they intended to move forward on reforms like reducing the size of the board and drawing independent maps, with or without Link's bill.

"We know what the right things are to do," Frank said.

## **Activist drama in Waukegan**

It's common for a handful of dedicated activists to chastise Mayor Wayne Motley and Waukegan aldermen during public comment time at the end of each City Council meeting.

But earlier this month, a rift was exposed among the activists themselves.

Margaret Carrasco, a frequent critic of the mayor, has raised questions about many of Motley's decisions, but has also aired alleged incidents from his personal life.

posts, and noted she has made mistakes herself, bringing up 2011 reports of a lawsuit accusing her of misrepresenting herself as an immigration attorney. Carrasco denied the allegations at the time.

"Obviously, Ralph's 'show' was politically staged by Mayor Motley in a 'desperate' effort to distract voters from the real issues," Carrasco said in a text message.

Peterson has defended the mayor more often of late, giving him credit for an agreement he helped foster between the city's Police Department and its Latino and African-American leaders.

"You're hurting people's families," Peterson said to Carrasco during the meeting. Carrasco then appeared to hint from the audience that she had potentially damaging information she could share about Peterson, as well.

"Top that, Lisa," Motley said after it was over, turning to Ald. Lisa May, 7th, for the beginning of aldermen's comments.

### **Fox River Corridor meeting**

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning will hold a meeting March 2 at Cary Village Hall for input on a plan to improve water quality, recreation and open space along the Fox River.

The plan is being spearheaded by CMAP and the McHenry County planning and development department, but Lake County is also involved.

The corridor spans from Route 176 to the edge of the Fox Bluff Conservation Area and includes parts of Cary, Fox River Grove, Island Lake, [Lake Barrington](#), Oakwood Hills, Port Barrington, Tower Lakes and Trout Valley, said CMAP communications associate Melissa Silverberg in an email.

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